



Arlington Commission for Arts & Culture

Date: Thursday, January 4, 2023

Time: 7:00-8:30p

Location: Hybrid

- In-person: Town Hall Annex conference room
- Virtual via Zoom - <https://town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/j/87612457128>
 - Passcode: 129949

Attendees: Stewart Ikeda, Christine Noah, Cristin Canterbury Bagnall, Sarah Morgan-Wu, Brian McMurray, Nicole Cuff, Lidia Kenig-Scher, Tom Formicola

Absent: Beth Locke

Guests: Greta Mastro, Anna Litten, Teresa Marzilli

Meeting called to order at 7:02pm.

Agenda

1. For Approval: [November minutes](#) and [December minutes](#) 7:00p-7:05p
 - Amendments:
 - November minutes – Vote on Your Arlington – remove the word vote.
 - November minutes – DPCD section – amend “funds left over” to “funds available”
 - December minutes – budget presentation – our finances seem healthy and we rolled some surplus into FY2024.
 - With the above amendments, the minutes were passed unanimously with no abstentions.
2. **Minutes & Secretary** 7:05p-7:10p
3. **DPCD & Chair Updates** 7:10p-7:30p
 - Officially appoint APS student commissioner (Greta Mastro)
 - Greta spoke about the role for this student commissioner. This role will help support student involvement with ACAC's work and help ensure continuity. For underclassmen, there could be an opportunity to fulfill high school volunteer requirements; for juniors, there could be an internship opportunity that is good for

college applications; for seniors, there could be an opportunity for a paid internship and the ability to take on more of a leadership role.

- We should keep in mind ways to engage students outside of Arlington Public Schools as well.
- **The commission unanimously elected Greta Mastro to be our newest commissioner in this student role.**
- Stewart and Katie will discuss with Town Counsel whether we need to make any changes to the by-laws in order to set up this one-year term.
- Jan 25, 4-6:30pm at Town Hall: ACAC has been invited to table at Lunar New Year celebration at Town Hall with the Town's DEI Division. Teresa Marzilli from the DEI Division has a support request.
 - Teresa spoke about her request. The Lunar New Year this year will involve a few different school groups and a few community members who will be leading crafts and other activities. She would like ArtsArlington to host a table as part of the event. For the performance event, she is hoping to hire a professional sound person – if there's anyone on the commission or connected to the commission who could lend their talents for that, it would be really helpful.
 - We can help spread the word in terms of marketing on social, in our newsletter, etc. We also have a winter intern who could put together a bulletin board.
 - We could potentially put some Live Arts funding towards this to help pay for a professional to do this. Nicole will reach out to Teresa and share some contacts, and will copy Cristin for invoicing.
- **DPCD** updates from Katie
 - Stewart and Christine will be meeting with Claire Ricker on January 11. Is there anything we should be sure to discuss with her or flag as a priority?
 - Standards for developers for housing with artist live/work space, especially with the passage of MBTA-C.
 - Greater Boston Council – Jim Grace – could be a good source of inspiration for this.
 - Discuss the Cultural District in terms of budget, goals, projects, etc.
 - Re: Cultural District, we've redesigned the brochure, we're working on banners, we've taken out some ads for the Cultural District including the audio tour, etc. Sarah will convene a small group of us to have a more focused discussion on the Cultural District and the former managing partners.
 - Katie got a quote from a sign maker for the audio tour signs, which would only be a few hundred dollars. We should plan to install them ourselves (or hire someone). Next steps are to finalize the design and locations, and then to work with the Select Board to get approval.
 - In addition to including a visual icon or information about the Cultural District, the wayfinding project will include a public art icon to direct people to murals, etc. This will be in all three business districts to get people on and off the bikeway.
 - Katie is still working on the application to get a mural on the bus depot in the Heights. ACAC will co-sign on the application.

- Katie will be recommending some changes to the vacant storefront by-law, which may or may not be going to Town Meeting this spring. She will be removing the public art waiver so it's not seen as a punishment. We could in the future have a public art option for vacant storefronts to display existing art or something similar – we can have more discussion on that in the future.
- Reminder: Check your State Ethics training expiration and confirm reading the Communications Policy if you post.
- **Reminder: Annual Report due Jan. 15:** We need updated stats and brags from committees [[last year's for reference](#)]. Quick reminder that for budgets / numbers, this would be for FY2023.
- DPCD also has a new deputy director named Sarah Suarez, who used to be a realtor in town. Now that they're fully staffed, they'll be looking at more substantial zoning changes, including commercial design guidelines.

4. **Grants Committee update** 7:30p-7:40p

- Brian gave an update. The committee is still in the middle of the process. They met twice in December to review and evaluate all of the applications. They received 64 applications this year, with requests totaling \$92K. They only have \$21K to grant. They've sent out some initial notifications to some applicants and they're in a period of some pending reconsideration. By the end of January, they will finalize those decisions and send out acceptances. They will finalize their report for the MCC by the 17th. ACAC would like to partner on a celebration for the grantees.
- Given the increase in applications and enthusiasm from artists for this program, we should potentially focus some of our fundraising energy on raising matching funds for the Grants Committee. This could also be part of our strategic planning process, as to where our funds are best allocated for programming versus infrastructure.

5. **Discussion: ACAC role with other Town entities** 7:40-8:00p

- Stewart read the inquiry from the Arlington Human Rights Commission about concerns regarding upcoming productions of Peter Pan.
 - Their Town liaison is the DEI Division and they were not previously aware of this issue being raised by the AHRC to the ACAC.
 - Do we want to play a role in this conversation with the theaters? If so, what should our role be?
 - We're not arbiters or dictators regarding the arts in town, so we have to be cognizant of how we decide to get involved, if at all.
 - We could play a convening or supporting role if and when a concrete problem has been identified.
 - We don't have any more authority than the AHRC in terms of influence or anything else.
 - This is not our programming so we don't have authority to take a stance in a way that we would if it were our programming.

- We should encourage them to connect with the theaters directly and gather more information about the productions and their plans. If more attention is needed, the DEI Division could be a partner.
- If we got involved, where would we draw the line? It's a slippery slope.
- Staying aware of what's going on, since we're the arts commission and folks may connect us to other arts experiences in town, might be smart here.
- AHRC should take the lead on reaching out to the theaters and if they asked us to facilitate a broader conversation or panel on Indigenous representation in the arts, etc., that would be appropriate.

6. **New Business** 8:20-8:30p

- Note from Cecily: The Black Joy exhibition is being extended! We're not sure exactly how long yet. There are also conversations under way to do another project with Sisters in Stitches in the future.
- Lidia: We still have no resolution on filling the spot on the Poet Laureate Committee. If anyone knows anyone who might be interested in serving on or chairing this committee, please contact Lidia. Lidia will send a description of the role to Stewart and the library to be able to circulate more widely.
- Lidia: The TRG holiday artisan market was fantastic. It was packed every day. The Friday night program has been a huge success.
- Lidia: She will send a reminder about the PlayTime donation and thank you to Christine.

Next meeting will be Thursday, February 1, 2024 from 7:00-8:30p

The meeting will be fully virtual.